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HENRY MOORE

40 Watercolors & Drawings

May 11 ~ 29, 1943

BUCHHOLZ GALLERY
CURT VALENTIN
32 EAST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK

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Biographical Note

HENRY MOORE was born in 1898 at Castelford, a small mining town in the West Riding of Yorkshire. He served in the army in World War I, and when demobilized began his studies in the Leeds School of Art. Two years later he proceeded to London to complete his training, but it was not in the schools, but in the British Museum and the Natural History Museum that he gained an insight into the real nature and latent possibilities of the art of sculpture. He now lives near London.

— HERBERT READ: *Henry M[illegible]e, Sculptor*

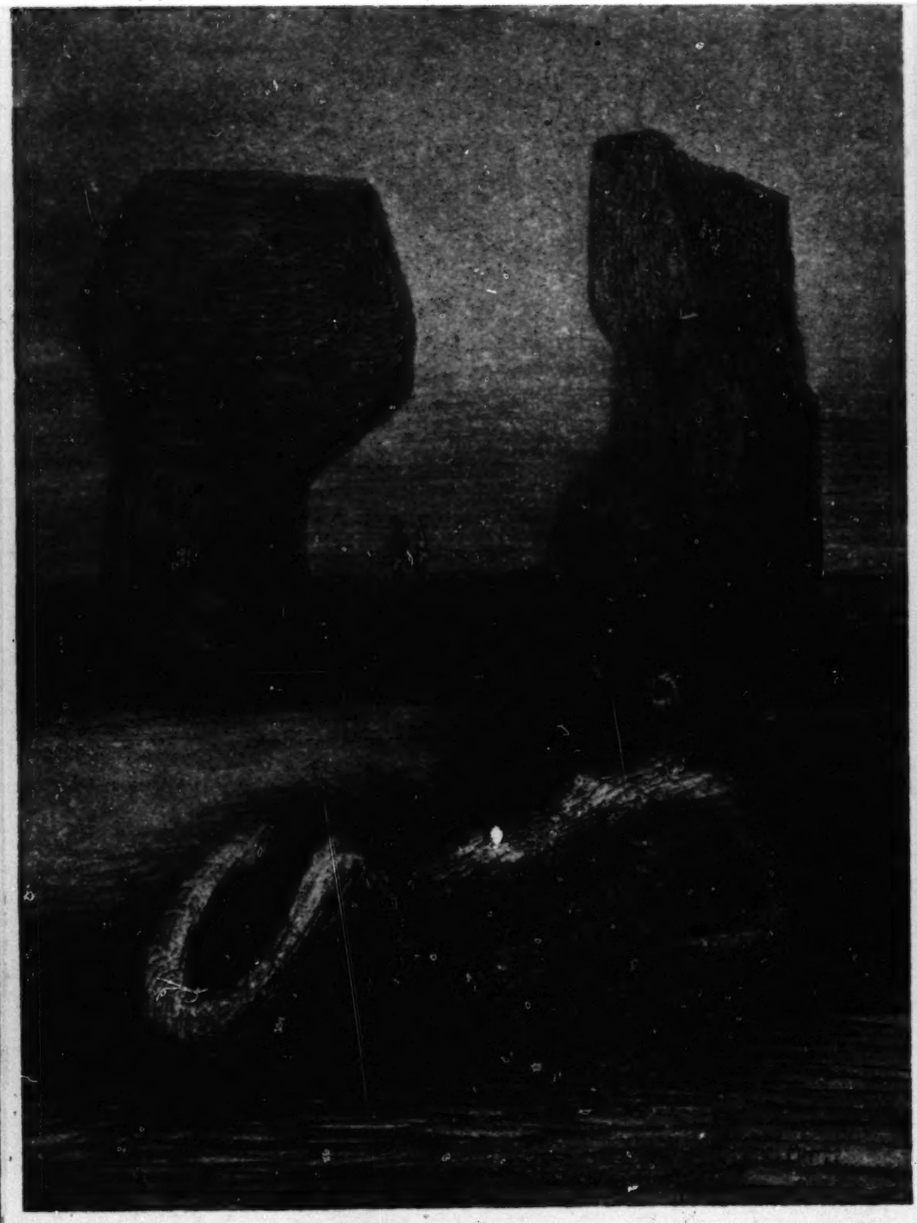
HENRY MOORE
a note on his drawings

by Sir Kenneth Clark

Director of the National Gallery, London

A SCULPTOR discovers and recreates form, and sculptors' drawings are primarily records of his search in nature for rhythmically coherent and expressive shapes. With Henry Moore the transposition of things seen into harmonies of hump and hollow is freer than in the older sculptors, and his drawings are further from their points of departure. His sketch-books are filled with ideas for sculpture, an abundance of exciting shapes swimming over the pages, first one, then another leaping to the eye and then vanishing like salamanders into flame. From this amazing reservoir Henry Moore extracts such ideas as hold for him a promise of development, and gives them, in larger drawings, a more independent and secure existence. A few of them may finally take solid shape in wood, stone, or metal.

Although the majority of Moore's drawings and all his recent sculpture bear no detailed resemblance to the human body, its general proportions underlie all his ideas and we have no difficulty in recognising it, standing, seated or reclining. Indeed Moore's sense of the human organism is so strong that, like Picasso, he can hardly draw a shape in which we do not immediately discover morphological characteristics. The roots and branches of his hollowed-out forms do not exist solely for aesthetic reasons but because they seem to be necessary to the life of the figure, like heart, lungs and pelvis. This animism is at the furthest remove from the disembodied harmonies which are the usual aim of abstract art and which too often die of their own purity. There is nothing pure or exclusively cerebral about Moore's work. The colour of his drawings, for example, is logically superfluous in studies for sculpture; but it is essential. It is not decorative, but emotive. It drenches each new form in a strong light of emotion and so helps to sustain for Moore himself the excitement of his first discovery. In his more elaborate drawings he uses an even stranger way of keeping his formal inventions alive: he groups them together and situates them in a definite ambience. He had begun this practice before the war but the drawings done in air raid shelters in 1940 suggested new possibilities in the composition of figures and their relation to their surroundings. His latest drawings show how this experience has been assimilated: his old, obsessive shapes re-emerge, but the draperies, and some of the terrors, of shelter life still enfold them and give them the fateful air of antique tragedy.



HENRY MOORE

BUCHHOLZ GALLERY
CURT VALENTIN

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